

title. His boys got that chance this year with the inaugural PIAA Dual Meet State Championships. Lead by Head Coach Thad Turner and Assistant Coaches Roland Reitz and Matthew Smith, the Raiders sought inspiration from senior Keith Ferraro, whose strength exhibited after the loss of his father is nothing short of heroic. Other seniors include Matt Geer, Jason Gilligan, Jason McKinney, Jeremy Reitz, Randy Stout, and B.J. Thomas. The junior team members are Casey Belfiore, James Bishop, Brad Cieleski, B.J. Darr, Garrett Hurd, Emil Johnson, Jeff McLaughlin, Eric Painter, and Clint Puller; along with sophomores Rudy Bullers, Gian DeLoia, Trevor Doust, Joel Hammond, Mark Himes, Mike Miller, Josh Sammons, and Justin Steiner; as well as freshman Nick Neil.

For Brookville High School, the 1999 wrestling season demonstrates not only greatness of body and mind, but also perseverance of spirit. Mr. Speaker, as their classmates and community celebrate their inspiring accomplishments today back in Pennsylvania, I ask you to join me in thanking the young men and coaches of the Brookville Raider wrestling team for showing us all that even the shadow of adversity, continued belief in a unifying goal will bring shining success.

MEDICARE ANTI-FRAUD EFFORTS: HOSPITALS BACKING OFF UP- CODING

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 14, 1999

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, for the past 14 years, hospitals have been up-coding their Medicare bills. Each year, the "complexity" of the cases that hospitals treat is said to increase. Like grade creep in a school, the way patients' illnesses are graded in a hospital gradually creeps upwards, and the taxpayer and Medicare pay more and more.

Last year, for the first time, the "complexity" of the cases declined.

As the following memo makes clear, this has something to do with the Administration's fight against waste, fraud, and abuse in Medicare and in the well-publicized case against Columbia-HCA.

Taxpayers and Medicare beneficiaries should congratulate HCFA, the HHS Inspector General, and Justice for their efforts. Vigilance against fraud is a major reason that the life of the Medicare hospital trust fund has just been extended from 2008 to 2015.

Date: November 19, 1998

From: Office of the Actuary

Subject: Analysis of PPS Hospital Case-Mix Change between 1997 and 1998

The prospective payment system, PPS, uses diagnosis related groups, DRG's, as the basis of payment. Each DRG is assigned a relative weight which is used in the payment formula. Average case-mix is the discharge-weighted mean of all the DRG relative weights. We have monitored changes in case-mix since the beginning of PPS in FY 1984. From FY 1983 through FY 1997, case-mix increased every year. FY 1998 is the first year we have measured a decrease in case-mix.

Based on information available through October 1998, we have measured a change in PPS hospital case-mix in FY 1998 of -0.74 percent. When we receive further updates for FY

1998, we estimate that the final measure of the FY 1998 case-mix increase will be in the neighborhood of -0.5 percent. Since FY 1998 is the first year that case-mix has decreased under PPS, I have undertaken a study of the reasons for this decrease. My study found the following:

As is usually the case, some DRG's contributed to an increase in case-mix while others contributed to a decrease.

The new DRG's for back and neck procedures increased case-mix 0.05 percent.

The redefinition of DRG 116 in combination with DRG 112 increased case-mix 0.59 percent.

The change in coding of pneumonia cases decreased case-mix 0.23 percent.

DRG's in complex-noncomplex pairs decreased case-mix 0.82 percent.

Non-pair DRG's decreased case-mix 0.27 percent.

While assessing cause-and-effect is always difficult, I believe that some of the decrease in case-mix is likely to be attributable to certain efforts to combat fraud and abuse. The Department of Justice investigation of the Hospital Corporation of America, subsequent indictments, and the possibility of triple damages may have prompted hospitals to code diagnoses less aggressively—resulting in fewer complex cases. Similarly, the inspector general's investigation of pneumonia cases may have caused the significant shift of admissions from the more expensive respiratory infections DRG's to the simple pneumonia DRG's. HIPAA provides continuing funding for fraud investigations, which may have a continuing impact on increases in case-mix.

THE TAX FREEDOM RESOLUTION

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 14, 1999

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I have introduced the "Tax Freedom Resolution", H.J. Res. —, that will repeal the 16th amendment to the Constitution. This resolution will reverse one of the most destructive amendments to the U.S. Constitution and deny Congress the ability to lay and collect taxes on income.

I believe that the 16th amendment has created a system that is economically destructive, impossibly complex, overly intrusive, unprincipled, dishonest, unfair, and inefficient. Now is the time for us to restore freedom to the American taxpayer.

The tax Freedom Resolution is the first step to do just that. It will encourage an open, honest and constructive debate about why our current tax structure has failed and what we can expect in a new system.

You may ask why we need to repeal the 16th amendment. The answer is quite simple. The current system cannot be fixed. It has already undergone 32 major revisions and 400 minor ones in the past 40 years. Each time the revisions has been made the system becomes more and more complicated and unfair.

The IRS has hundreds and hundreds of different tax forms, plus countless more to explain how to fill out these forms. The original Tax Code had 11,400 words in it. Today it has well over 7 million words.

Our current system also discourages savings and investment while hampering economic growth. Complying with the Federal Tax

Code costs taxpayers more than \$250 billion each year. In 1991, the Tax Foundation reported that small corporations spent a minimum of \$382 in compliance costs for every \$100 they paid in income taxes.

In addition, several economists have said that replacing the current tax system will cause interest rates to go down and savings and capital investment to increase.

Right now, we have a system that stifles opportunity by picking winners and losers. It's a system in which Washington, DC, decides what is best for the American people instead of letting the people decide what is best for America.

The Federal Government simply takes too much money out of people's pockets. As recently as 1982, Americans paid only 19.9 percent of their income in taxes. New data reveals that in 1998, Americans paid 35.4 percent of their income in taxes—the highest level in history and increasing each year. In fact, Tax Freedom Day 1998 was May 10th, which means that Americans are working, on average 129 days before paying off their total tax bill. We must stop this confiscatory trend.

By embracing the principles of FREEDOM, we can create a system that is Fair and simple, that Reduces the federal bureaucracy, that Encourages savings and investment, that is Efficient, that Drives the economy, that creates Opportunity for all, and that puts More money in American pockets.

Fundamental and comprehensive tax reform will be one of the most profound and liberating changes our nation experiences. It is time for all of us—whether you support a flat tax, a consumption tax, a value-added tax, or a national sales tax—to come together and focus on our common goal: Replacing the current system. The Tax Freedom Resolution gives us the chance to do just that and at the same time restore FREEDOM to the American taxpayer.

BATTLESHIP RESOLUTION

HON. SONNY CALLAHAN

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 14, 1999

Mr. CALLAHAN. Mr. Speaker, the esteemed crew of the battleship U.S.S. *Alabama* will hold their annual reunion in the city of Mobile, Alabama, during the third week in April. I would like to take this opportunity to express to these men the undying appreciation which their fellow Americans share for their proud service to our nation and the world.

The U.S.S. *Alabama*, a South Dakota class battleship, was built in the Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Portsmouth, Virginia. Following her commission on August 16, 1942, she was dispatched to the North Atlantic Ocean, where she and her crew proudly assisted the British Fleet in protecting convoys on the treacherous "Murmansk Run," which carried them from England through the North Sea to Russia, and brought the defending fleet into conflict with German warships and aircraft in occupied Norway.

After completing her service with the British Fleet, the U.S.S. *Alabama* was transferred to the Pacific Fleet. Her charge on the Eastern Front of the War was to provide invaluable support to U.S. ground troops, enabling them

to successfully take the Caroline, Gilbert, Marianas, Marshall, and Philippine Islands, as well as Palau, New Guinea and Okinawa from the Japanese.

The distinguished service of the crew of the U.S.S. *Alabama* includes numerous proud honors and achievements.

During the Battle of the Philippine Sea, her radar was the first to detect the approach of enemy bombers, 476 of which were downed by the American fighters and fleet gunners. During her tenure in the American Fleet, the U.S.S. *Alabama* was directly responsible for the elimination of 22 Japanese airplanes.

By the time of the Japanese surrender, she had earned the American Service Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with 9 Battle Stars, the Philippine Republic Presidential Unit Citation, the Philippine Liberation Ribbon, the World War II Victory Medal, and the Navy Occupation Service Medal.

Her crew had proven themselves among the most courageous of the Allied fighting men, having faced the most fearsome opposition that the Axis forces had to offer as they defended the world against both Asian and European tyranny. In honor of these heroic Americans, I introduced H. Res. 123, which would immortalize their gallant contribution to liberty in our nation and the world.

RESOLUTION

Recognizing and honoring the crewmembers of the U.S.S. ALABAMA (BB-60) and the U.S.S. ALABAMA Crewmen's Association.

Whereas the U.S.S. ALABAMA (BB-60) was a South Dakota class battleship that served first in the North Atlantic and then in the Pacific Fleet during World War II;

Whereas in the course of World War II, the crewmembers of the U.S.S. ALABAMA directly shot down 22 enemy aircraft;

Whereas the crewmembers of the U.S.S. ALABAMA earned the American Service Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with 9 Battle Stars, the Philippine Republic Presidential Unit Citation, the Philippine Liberation Ribbon, the World War II Victory Medal, and the Naval Occupation Service Medal;

Whereas the crewmembers of the U.S.S. ALABAMA were a courageous group, braving both the Arctic chill and the Pacific heat to help defend the Nation against enemy oppression;

Whereas many former crewmembers of the U.S.S. ALABAMA belong to the U.S.S. ALABAMA Crewmen's Association;

Whereas each year the former crewmembers participate in an annual reunion to celebrate their shared service, memories, and friendship; and

Whereas more than 100 former crewmembers, along with family and friends, are expected to participate in the next reunion, which will be held from April 15 to 18, 1999, aboard the U.S.S. ALABAMA at the Battleship Memorial Park in Mobile, Alabama; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives recognizes and honors the crewmembers of the U.S.S. ALABAMA (BB-60) and the U.S.S. ALABAMA Crewmen's Association for their valuable contributions to victory and peace in World War II and to the security and prosperity of the Nation.

Mr. Speaker, the valuable contributions to victory and peace in World War II made by the crewmen of the U.S.S. *Alabama* are exemplary of the tenacity which has made the United States the proud world leader it is

today. I ask that you join me in honoring these brave Americans, and in thanking them for their sacrifices and dedication.

EXPOSING RACISM

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 14, 1999

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, In my continuing efforts to document and expose racism in America, I submit the following articles into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

[From the New York Times, Feb. 24, 1999]

MAN SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS IN LOUISIANA HATE CRIME

GRETN, LA.—A white man convicted of a hate crime for trying to torch two cars belonging to black motorists has been sentenced to the maximum of 20 years in prison.

Prosecutors said it was the first trial involving Louisiana's hate crime law.

Frank Palermo, 32, was convicted in December of two counts of a hate crime and of dousing the vehicles with gasoline. He was sentenced Monday by State District Judge Walter Rothschild, who told Palermo, "You were out to get these people because of their race."

One of the cars had a small child in it. The cars didn't burn because it was raining at the time of the incident last September.

Authorities said, Palermo and his younger brother, Patrick, encountered the blacks working on a stalled car along an expressway in Harvey, a New Orleans suburb. Witnesses testified the Palermos became involved in a shouting match with one driver, and then fistfights broke out. Racial slurs were used, authorities said.

Frank Palermo got a baseball bat and broke windows in one car, then grabbed a gas can and poured fuel on it and another car that had a crying child strapped inside, witnesses said. They said the brothers tried to ignite the gas but the rain kept it from burning, and the brothers then fled.

The younger brother received the minimum sentence of three years in prison. He had been acquitted of the hate crime count but convicted of helping put gasoline on the cars.

The hate crime law, passed in 1997, allows a judge to add up to five extra years to a felony sentence if it is found that the actions stemmed from hatred because of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, national origin or membership in an organization.

[From the New York Times, February 24, 1999]

JURY CONVICTS MAN OF CROSS-BURNING AT HOME OF INTERRACIAL COUPLE

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA.—A teen-ager was convicted today of attempting to burn a cross on the lawn of an interracial couple but was acquitted of a conspiracy charge.

The Circuit Court jury deliberated about three hours over two days on the case against Richard J. Elliott, 19, who lives next door to the couple in a rural neighborhood near the North Carolina state line.

Elliott stood quietly as the verdict was read. He faces up to five years in prison and a \$2,500 fine on the charge of attempting to burn a cross with the intent to intimidate.

Elliott was one of three white teen-agers arrested in the burning of a cross last May on the law of James and Susan Jubilee.

Jonathan S. O'Mara, 19, of Virginia Beach, pleaded guilty Monday to felony charges of conspiracy and attempting to burn a cross

with the intent to intimidate. Under a plea agreement, O'Mara has the right to appeal.

A 17-year-old boy has agreed to plead guilty to the same charges in juvenile court and testified against Elliott. In exchange, he will not be sentenced as an adult.

Jubilee, who is black, said he moved from Los Angeles back to Virginia to get away from big-city crime and raise his sons in a more peaceful environment.

About four months after moving into his new house, Jubilee awoke to find a wooden cross in his front yard with a burned spot in the middle.

Jubilee testified that as he pulled out of his driveway the morning of May 3, he saw a cross about 20 feet from his home.

"I took a double take, because I couldn't believe what I really saw," Jubilee said.

Enraged, he broke the 4-by-2-foot cross over his knee. He said his anger then turned to fear that the cross might be a warning of violence to come.

The 17-year-old testified that O'Mara and Elliott attended a party at his home the night of May 2 and that all three drank a lot of beer. There, Elliott allegedly expressed anger at Jubilee for complaining about a shooting range that Elliott and his father had in their back yard.

"He wanted to get back at them," the boy said.

Elliott suggested they burn a cross, so the three of them built a cross in the boy's garage, the boy said.

O'Mara is to be sentenced April 26. He faces up to 10 years in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

Kevin Martingayle, O'Mara's attorney, said outside the courtroom that his client is not a racist.

"He's ignorant and he was drunk but he's not a racist," he said.

ABA POLL SAYS 47 PERCENT OF AMERICANS DOUBT RACIAL FAIRNESS OF COURTS

(By Richard Carelli)

WASHINGTON (AP).—Too many Americans believe the nation's courts do not provide equal justice for racial minorities, the American Bar Association's president said, as the group released a poll showing nearly half of Americans feel that way.

"This is a very serious problem we . . . cannot afford to ignore," Little Rock, Ark., lawyer Philip Anderson said Tuesday. "We are concerned that the current perception of bias will eventually erode confidence in our system of justice."

Of 1,000 people surveyed by telephone in August, 47 percent said they strongly disagreed with a statement that "the courts treat all ethnic and racial groups the same." Only 39 percent agreed with the statement, and 14 percent voiced no view.

Asked whether courts treat men and women alike, 55 percent said yes, 30 percent said no, and 15 percent expressed no view.

Anderson noted that another recent ABA poll indicated great disagreement between white and black lawyers over the justice system's racial fairness.

"This raises the obvious question that if people believe the justice system is tainted with bias, how long can they expect the courts to remedy bias elsewhere in our society?" Anderson said. "Right now, the high degree of confidence in the courts exists side by side with the perception of bias in the courts. As the minority populations increase in America, will the perception of bias increase?"

He said the 350,000-member ABA "will intensify our efforts to eradicate gender and racial bias in our courts."

The poll released Tuesday contains some seemingly inconsistent findings. For example, most people—51 percent—believe the justice system "needs a complete overhaul,"